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ABSTRACT

The National Teachers Examinations (NTE) Core Battery scores of initially certified teachers in North Carolina were compared with teaching effectiveness scores. Teacher effectiveness scores were obtained using the Teacher Performance and Appraisal Instrument (TPAI)--a classroom observation instrument used by a trained team of observers. The TPAI focuses on teaching techniques used in the classroom and identifies 25 teaching practices grouped into five major teaching functions: (1) time management; (2) behavior management; (3) instructional presentation; (4) instructional monitoring; and (5) instructional feedback. All 111 subjects involved in the study had completed the NTE; only 74 of the subjects completed both the NTE and the TPAI. No correlations were found between scores on the two instruments. Reliance on the NTE by administrators hiring new teachers is questioned. (TJH)

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RESEARCH AND POLICY

IN

EVALUATING INITIALLY CERTIFIED TEACHERS IN

NORTH CAROLINA

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ABSTRACT

Public policy demands some action in teacher education and test results are used to show good people are giving the problem careful attention. NTE scored of 111 initially certified teachers were compared with teaching effectiveness scores and no correlation was found. Yet, the scores continue to be used despite the umbrage found by research.

RESEARCH AND POLICY

IN

EVALUATING INITIALLY CERTIFIED TEACHERS

IN NORTH CAROLINA

This study presents an interesting paradox which highlights a persistent puzzling problem in educational research which is the use or non-use of research in public policy. North Carolina like many other states is searching for excellence in education. A need for more qualified teachers was emphasized in such publications as a Nation at Risk or A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century. North Carolina uses two measures to assess teachers. The first is the National Teachers Examination (NTE) which is a prerequisite to becoming a teacher. The second measure is the Teacher Performance and Appraisal Instrument (TPAI) which is a classroom observation instrument used by a trained team of observers. The instrument generally concentrated on the teaching techniques used in the classroom. The TPAI is a validated instrument that identifies 25 teaching practices grouped into five major teaching functions (1) management of time, (2) management of behavior, (3) instructional presentation, (4) instructional monitoring and (5) instructional feedback. Inter-rater reliability exceeds 90%. (Hawk, 1987)

In an effort to convince the public that good people are looking after the problem in a thoughtful manner, several changes in teacher testing have been proposed or implemented. For example, teachers in North Carolina are no longer certified upon graduation from an accredited university. Instead they become

Initially Certified Teachers (ICT) for a three-year probationary period. Before or during this time they must pass the common and the area NTE and are evaluated several times a year in the classroom by trained observers utilizing the TPAI. There are cogent arguments on both sides of testing and evaluation, but it seems that the NTE scores are given a high priority in the hiring of teachers, and the same scores are utilized to predict teacher classroom performance in a heuristic manner. The Educational Testing Service does not recommend this, but it is done.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there were a correlation between the NTE and the scores on the TPAI by Initially Certified Teachers with little or no experience. One hundred and eleven initially certified teachers (ICT) were used in this study. All of them took the NTE area, but only 74 took the common. The table shows the correlations between the common and the area of the NTE and the TPAI. Neither section of the NTE appears to be closely related to the classroom performance of teachers as measured by the TPAI. Administrators, however, seem to give the NTE scores credence when hiring teachers and appear to believe that it has the ability to predict classroom performance. An important aspect of this belief in the NTE are proposals by state agencies to raise the cutoff score to the 35 percentile. This, of course, would effectively eliminate about a third of the candidates in general, but in particular it would eliminate more minority candidates. This proposed action could have a domino effect mainly on small colleges by disqualifying more than 50 percent of their graduates. The decrease in

candidates would effectively eliminate the programs in many colleges, both black and white, public and private. The study showed there was no correlation between classroom performance and the NTE scores. Yet, the zeitgeist says "do something." So, the NTE scores will continue to be used in the selection and grading of teachers. This use of the NTE seems to place research in the position of "a running footman," and a following one at that telling policy makers or perhaps just ourselves where we have been, rather than where we are going.

Correlation of NTE with TPAI

	N	Correlation	Probability
Area	111	.13	.28
Common	74	.11	.35

Hawk, Parmalee, (1987). Beginning teacher programs: benefits for the experienced teacher. Action Teacher Education VIII, 4, 59-63.